

**SENATE, No. 2163**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**218th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED MARCH 5, 2018

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator BOB ANDRZEJCZAK**

**District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)**

**Senator JEFF VAN DREW**

**District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes “New Farmers Improvement Grant Program” to provide matching grants for farm improvements to beginning farmers.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/29/2019)**

1 AN ACT concerning grants to beginning farmers for farm  
2 improvements and supplementing Title 4 of the Revised Statutes.

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
5 *of New Jersey:*

6  
7 1. As used in this act:

8 “Beginning farmer” means a person who desires to engage in  
9 farming and has never farmed before, who has engaged in farming  
10 in the State for 10 years or less as of the effective date of this act, or  
11 who qualifies as a first-time farmer pursuant to 26 U.S.C.  
12 s.147(c)(2).

13 “Department” means the Department of Agriculture.

14 “Farming” means the cultivation of land for the production of  
15 agricultural crops, the raising of poultry, the production of eggs, the  
16 production of milk, the production of fruit or other horticultural  
17 crops, grazing, the production of livestock, aquaculture,  
18 hydroponics, the production of forest products, or other activities  
19 designated by the department pursuant to rules and regulations.

20

21 2. a. There is established in the Department of Agriculture  
22 the “New Farmers Improvement Grant Program,” to provide  
23 matching grants for farm improvements to beginning farmers  
24 investing in diversification of their farming operations and  
25 innovations for the sustainability of those operations. The  
26 department shall award grants of between \$15,000 and \$50,000, for  
27 up to 50 percent of total project costs. The department shall award  
28 matching grants to eligible farmers only for projects that:

29 (1) expand or diversify agricultural or horticultural production on  
30 the farm or extend its growing or production season;

31 (2) implement innovative agricultural or horticultural techniques  
32 that increase the use of sustainable practices such as organic  
33 farming, food safety, reduction of farm waste, or water  
34 conservation; or

35 (3) create or expand partnerships with other farms, regional food  
36 hubs, or agriculture-dependent institutions and entities to improve  
37 the processing, selling, and distributing of agricultural or  
38 horticultural products.

39 b. Eligible costs to be funded by a matching grant under the  
40 program shall include the purchase of new or used machinery,  
41 equipment, or supplies, or the construction of buildings and  
42 physical structures to be used exclusively for agricultural or  
43 horticultural purposes, and any other costs established as eligible  
44 costs pursuant to rules and regulations adopted pursuant to  
45 subsection e. of this section.

46 c. A farmer shall be eligible for a matching grant, and may  
47 apply in the form and manner prescribed by the department, if:

- 1 (1) the farmer is 18 years of age or older and is a beginning  
2 farmer;
- 3 (2) the beginning farmer materially and substantially participates  
4 in day-to-day production of agricultural or horticultural products  
5 raised on the farm, as determined by the department;
- 6 (3) the farm is 150 acres or less and located wholly within the  
7 State; and
- 8 (4) the farming operation has a minimum of \$10,000 in gross  
9 sales in the preceding calendar year from agricultural or  
10 horticultural products grown or derived from the applicant's farm  
11 operation as reflected in either personal or business federal tax  
12 return forms.
- 13 d. The Department of Agriculture shall request annually as part  
14 of its annual budget proposal a minimum of \$100,000 to fund the  
15 grants authorized pursuant to this section. The department shall  
16 also pursue and develop, with the Department of Environmental  
17 Protection, the United States Department of Agriculture, and any  
18 other applicable State or federal agency, any available federal,  
19 State, local, and private funding for the grants authorized pursuant  
20 to this section.
- 21 e. The Department of Agriculture shall adopt, pursuant to the  
22 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et  
23 seq.), rules and regulations necessary to implement this act,  
24 including, but not limited to, establishing other costs as eligible  
25 costs in addition to those established in section b. of this section  
26 and the manner in which a beginning farmer shall provide the  
27 required 50 percent match for a grant.

28  
29 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

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32 STATEMENT

33  
34 This bill establishes in the Department of Agriculture the "New  
35 Farmers Improvement Grant Program," to provide matching grants  
36 for farm improvements to beginning farmers investing in  
37 diversification of their farming operations and innovations for the  
38 sustainability of those operations. The bill defines "beginning  
39 farmer" as a person who desires to engage in farming and has never  
40 farmed before, who has engaged in farming in the State for 10 years  
41 or less as of the bill, or who qualifies as a first time farmer pursuant  
42 to federal law at 26 U.S.C. s.147(c)(2).